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**The Great Mother Goddess Mo (Ma; Do-Ma). Proto-Indo-European Aryan Homeland of the Great Mother Goddess:
The Neolithic village of Tumba Madžari in Skopje,
Macedonia**



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The Neolithic Village of Tumba Madžari in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia

Tumba Madžari (Macedonian: Тумба Маџари) is a prehistoric settlement from the 7th millennium BCE located in the north-eastern part of Skopje, Macedonia, and it is one of the most significant and also one of the oldest Neolithic settlements along the river Vardar basin. The Neolithic settlement at Tumba Madžari represents the most ancient known protogenic core of today's capital of Macedonia, posing the city of Skopje¹ among the oldest inhabited places in the world with 9000-years long history. It is also one of the very first known permanent urban sites with a sanctuary in the human history and Europe. The historian H. A. Lamb explicitly and unequivocally says: *"Macedonia is the place where the first agricultural village in Europe was founded, which dates from around 6620 BCE ... The conditions for creating there were especially pronounced thanks to the authentic and one of a kind people. Because of this it is a place of numerous and homogeneous kingdoms."*²

The first archaeological excavations were conducted in 1978 by the Museum of Macedonia, under the leadership of V. Sanev. Archeological findings at the prehistoric settlement Tumba Madžari are astonishing evidence of material and spiritual life and high artistic and aesthetic achievements of the Neolithic man from Macedonia, taking place in the period spanning between year 6500 and 4300 BCE. The geographic position, the fertile ground for agriculture and stockbreeding, and the major route, have been appealing to many well-known and unknown tribes and people who settled here for a shorter or longer period of time. The traces of the prehistoric culture in R. of Macedonia (of which Lepenski Vir is later part) dates as far back as 8000 BCE, and precedes the one of Vinča for 1000 or more years. Neolithic sites Tumba near the village of Dolno Palčište (1987/88.) and Tumba near village of Stenče (2000) are the far oldest traces of life in the Polog valley (Tetovo and Gostivar region in northwestern Macedonia) and are also dated some 8000 years ago, or more specifically since the year 6100 BCE. From those sites came a large number of excavated fragments, several fully preserved items of pottery, and also sacrificial cult plastic and statuettes dedicated to the female cult.

The prehistoric settlement Tumba Madžari it's located in the area between contemporary settlements Madžari 2 and Chento, about 700 meters on the left from the highway E-75 (Skopje–Kumanovo–Veles). It is a low hill, some 220 m long and 3 m high mound. Although it was used for agricultural purposes (until the earthquake of 1963), it was somewhat impressive. Along with the settlement and the uncontrollable

¹ Other older names: *Skuopoi / Skupi, Justiniana Prima, Skopis*.

² Harold A. Lamb, "Alexander of Macedon" (1924)

building of new houses, a new environment was created where the mound was left unnoticeable. It has been archaeologically proved that the remains of a multifaceted settlement, with a 3-meter layer, denote the 3 stages of life and belong to the Anzabegovo-Vršnik cultural group (II-IV). An area of 1400 m² has been explored in which ruins and 7 facilities (six dwellings and a sanctuary) have been discovered. All facilities were built with rectangular and square shapes with walls consisting of massive timber and mud. From these findings a Neolithic village was recreated, and now it can be seen in the sensational archaeological park. Remains of fireplaces and numerous items of material culture have been found in every facility. The ceramic pots depicting a broad typology of shapes and decorative motifs performed with barbotine, impresso and bichromate painting techniques (brown on red background) are certainly the most common. In regards to ornamentation, a certain symbolism (rain, wheat spikes, grain, water) associated with the everyday life of the Neolithic man is portrayed in the majority of vessels (in addition to technological and aesthetic values of art). The cult plastic is also quite significant, especially the anthropomorphic one, which artistically is still free of old traditional patterns.

The Cult of the Great Mother Goddess

The Great Mother Goddess (protector of fertility and vegetation) is presented among the Neolithic cultures of the central Macedonian peninsula in a yet unknown way for the Stone Age period. Symbolized as a matron of the temple, protector of the house and family, and a feeding mother with divine functions she is presented in the form of anthropomorphic house, shaped in a female figure that rises from the roof, and is identified as a protector of the house and the family.

The previous "Stone Age Venuses" which represented the 1st stage, one of promiscuity and immorality, were generally fertility "fetishes", magical objects to ensure birth and they bear no clear markers of divinity. At most, they were images of local deities or half-deities rather than a universal goddesses.

The 2nd stage, Matriarchy, was the visceral realm of an earth mother, one of whose primary concerns was fertility. It is the period of the discovery and the invention of farming, when the primordial society in prehistoric Macedonia changes dramatically. The phenomenon of agriculture overthrow the Paleolithic indelicate male domination based on mere brutal force. The female fertility worship took over and gave the rise of these 'seedfarers' through new cultural forms in means of instinctual and spiritual guide. This new cult of earthly procreation in no way can be interpreted as 'masculine'. It is not that the male population did something wrong to lose its Paleolithic supremacy, but as the man lacks the womb which gives the birth (like the earth does) the worship of the Great Mother Goddess became the self-evident and indubitable new credo of the emerging agricultural Proto-Indo-Europeans in Macedonia. In her various appearances she was directly related with the earth and fertility, as the result of what these new Neolithic farmers learned to do and relied upon in order to survive.

Numerous Neolithic graves and burials with the remains of the deceased in a fetus-like crouched position discover another aspect of this waste spread credo, of the Earthly Mother Goddess, where she symbolizes the fertile soil that gives birth (and re-birth) to everything alive, and vice versa, the earth as the most probable and comparable appearance of her fertility. Her earthly attributes brought her even further, into close connection with the underworld, thus the 'afterlife' was invented too and later she was put in charge of the chthonic sanctuaries as well (e.g. the goddess *Demetra*).



Above: Enthroned Demetra holding staff and stalks of wheat and Persephone with torches. 5th century BCE

As unnamed "*Grain Mistress*", underlining her earthly "power and favour", she was the goddess of seeds, grain and rebirth. Thus the ritual milling and production of bread was usual thing for sanctuaries. The Supreme Mother Goddess was *procreatrice* of the life, mistress of the nature, goddess of the life and death cycle, mother of all the other gods, queen of the forests and animals, etc.

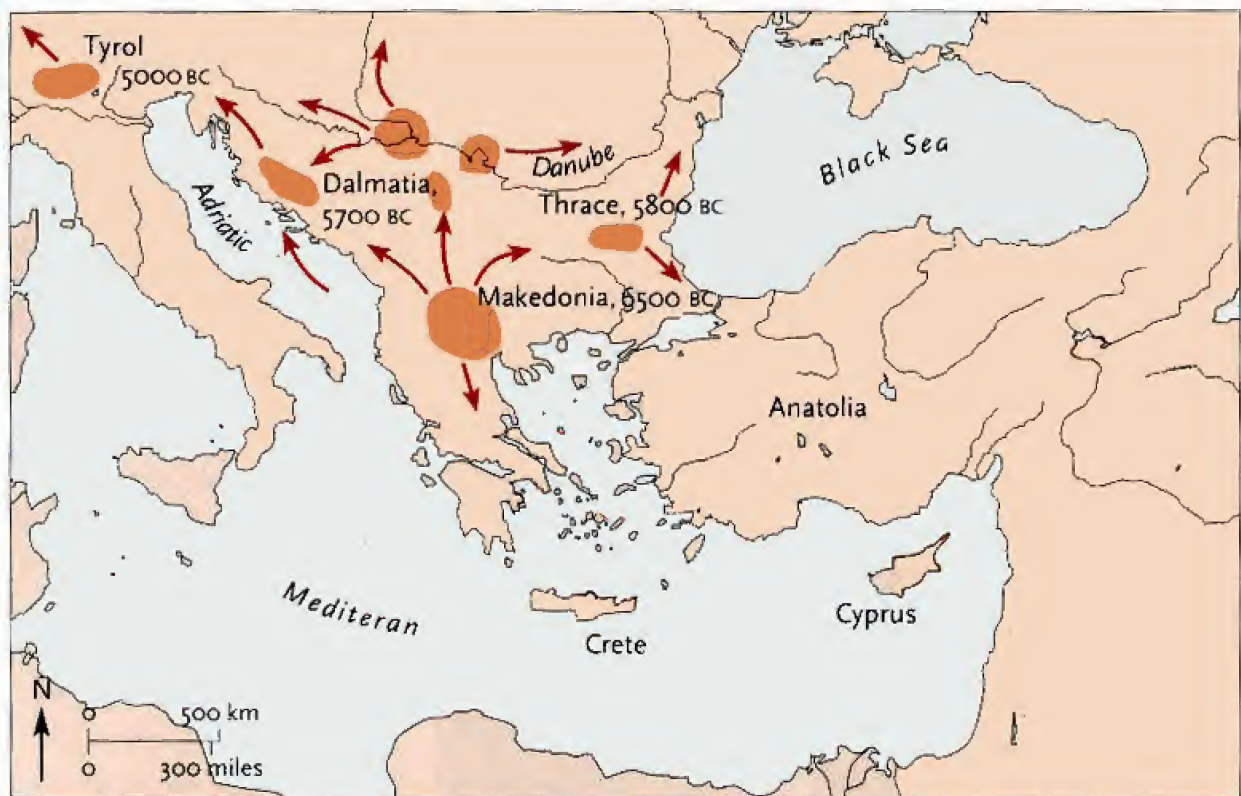
In the later, historical times, various Mother Goddesses (*Innana-Ishtar/Astarte*, *Anat* and *Asherah*, *Cybele*, *Isis*, *Demetra*, *Uni/Juno*, etc.) wielded immense power too, but in a male-dominated pantheons. These goddesses were integral to the fertility and prosperity of their land, but usually only in conjunction with one or more male deities, into a male-dominated, polytheistic cultures, that worshipped both male and female deities. They were definitely not the only or even principal deities in such cultures, nor can we speak of "goddess religions" or "goddess cultures" as they existed in more ancient times. Goddesses received worship as part of a fertility ritual, though the focus of the rite was normally on their male consort. Nevertheless, sanctuaries dedicated only to goddesses like *Demetra* were widespread, in conjunction of their male comparisons.

The Mother Goddess of Tumba Madžari, on contrary to the Stone Age Venuses or historical times Mother Goddesses, is the first exclusively female divinity cult, universal bearer of the undisputed supreme-feminine protective and fertility power in the widely contested matriarchate society. The discovered sanctuary in Tumba Madžari was dedicated solely to her and to her only, no other divinities notion was found close to her altar. The Mother Goddess of these proto-Macedonic prehistoric settlements is a symbol with narrative iconography, enriched with paleo-ethnographic details. The sanctuary of the Great Mother Goddess of Tumba Madžari, lifted on wooden piles, was used for performing offering rituals and adoration. In the ceremonial chalices and other pottery around the places of her worship clay tokens, offerings, and remains of grain or even tiny clay-objects shaped as grain were found regularly.

The Great Mother Goddess Altar



The Pre-Indo-European earliest Neolithic altars of the Great Mother from Tumba Madžari are 8000 years old. Thus the cult of the Great Mother Goddess from Macedonia is probably the oldest of all known religions related to anthropomorphic gods. It was the time of matriarchate in the agricultural settlements of the Macedonian peninsula and wider Mediterranean area, and was associated with the principles of fertility, birth and creation. The population density was growing, probably also as the result of her worshipping. About the 5th millennium BCE it tripled or quadrupled, provoking movements and spreading of the agricultural Proto-Indo-Europeans. This further expansion through time and space is proven by the development of subsequent cultures along Danube (*Lepenski Vir*, *Starčevo-Vinča* 5000 BCE), toward Moldavia-Ukraine (i.e. *Cucuteni-Tripolte* culture 4000 BCE), and further toward central Europe (*Halstatt* and *La Tène* culture 2000 BCE), etc.



There was no personal property, people lived in collectives. The land was around the village and everybody worked there, and the surplus was kept in the rooms for storage in the temples. The religion included collective property, thus the Mother Goddess was protector of the wellness, home and family. The Neolithic Art was prevalently 'Feminine', on the difference from Paleolithic 'Masculine' culture of hunter-gatherers who worshiped animalistic cults and deities.

What made the site of Tumba Madžari widely known is the discovery, for the first time, of a clay depiction of the Great Mother Goddess with the classic calm posture of the goddess emerging from the top of a house, thus implying protection of its core by reflecting harmony and peace. Such a representation of the Great Mother Goddess, as one with the dwelling place, was also result of the appearance of this new environment in agricultural settlements – the house.

Below: **Altars of the Great Mother Goddess from Macedonia: 1.Tumba Madžari in Skopje; 2. Porodin, near Bitola; 3. Govrlevo, near Skopje.**



The innate notion and inseparable primordial imagery that bonds the house with mother changed forever the submissive role of the woman. It gave her the immense importance and transformed her social status in the Neolithic Age communities from fully-dependent member into powerful decisive force of life or death, procreation or nullity. This extremely powerful, but gentle-ensuring and almost subconsciously comforting concept of the motherly home, cannot be explained better and simpler than through the most basic etymological meaning of the Macedonian word for home – '*doma*': *Dō* - next to, close, and *Ma* - mama.³ One simple word that bonds everyone's two most dear things of this world, home and mom. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Neolithic objects and altars dedicated to the house-shaped Mother Goddess are found with so persistent frequency all around Macedonia.⁴ With no hesitation we can denominate her the Great Mother Goddess of Home. Furthermore, in Hindi⁵ the word pronounced as "*Makedoniya*" correspondingly means 'the world of mother' (see Google Translate).

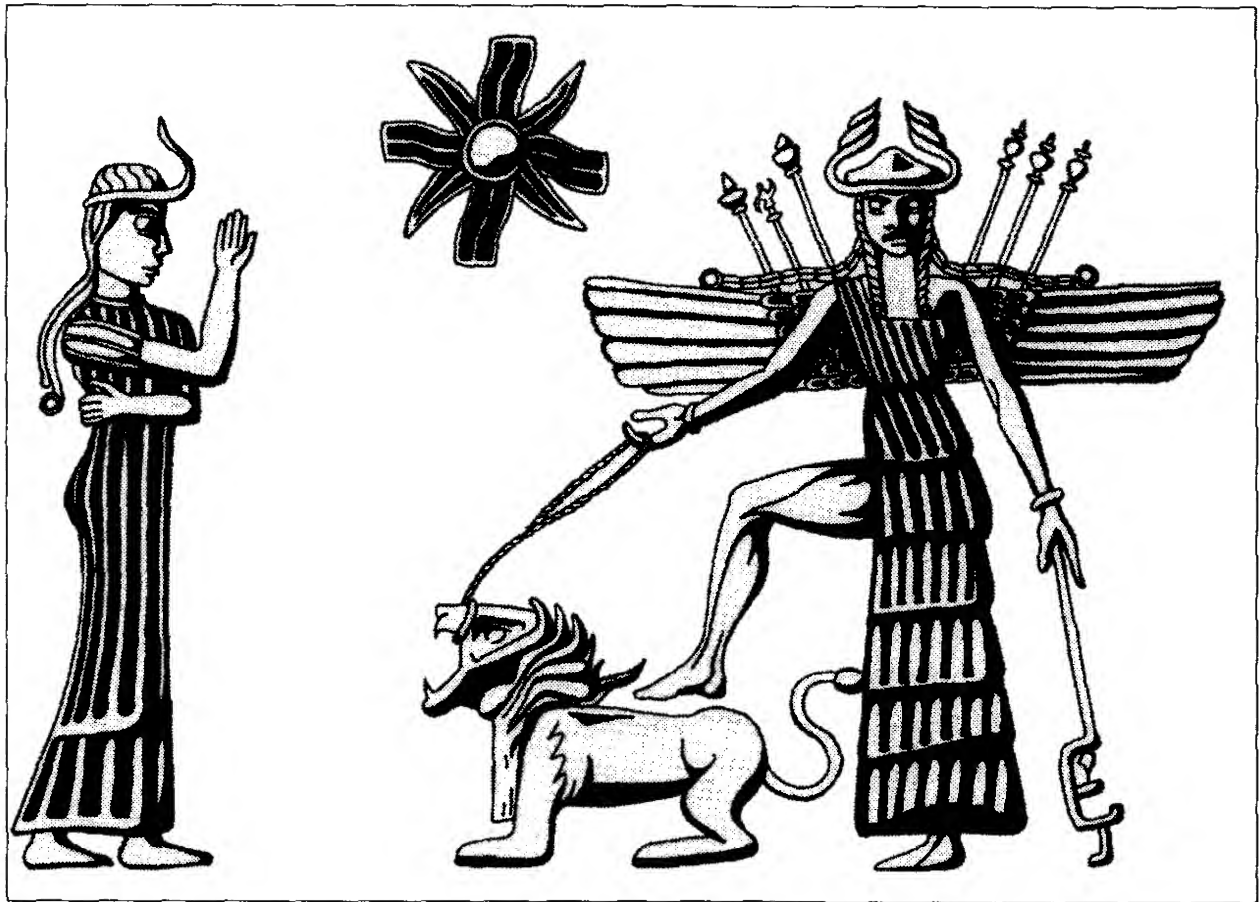
The Neolithic cult of the Great Mother Goddess in the later historic periods and pantheons in ancient Macedonia was further transmitted through the Pelasgo-Macedonic *Bryges* and *Paionian* communities, and places of worship spread all around, from Macedonia to (and across) lower Danube, as well as into Asia Minor. Her primordial worship in the archaic times transcended into the cult of *Mother of Gods* and later she appears as Phrygian *Kibela* (lat. *Cybele*), Egyptian *Isis*,⁶ Sumerian *Inanna-Ishtar*, Babylonian *Astarte*, Pelasgian *Demetra*, Etruscan *Uni* (i.e. Roman *Juno*, *Magna Mater Deorum*), etc.

³ Eng. *domestic*; from Latin *domus*; from Macedonic *doma* – 'home'.

⁴ The archaeological sites of Govrlevo, Porodin, Suvodol, Vršnik, etc.

⁵ The oldest living language on the world.

⁶ Herodotus, II, 60.



Above: Triumphant winged *Inanna-Ishtar*, with foot on her lion, her eight-pointed star symbol above her, king-worshipped by a lesser goddess. Black stone cylinder seal, Akkadian, 2334-2154 BCE.

Close examination of the evidence shows that these ancient goddesses were complicated entities with powers, realms, and functions just as often pertaining to culture as they are to nature. Cybele was the goddess of nature and fertility. She was a goddess of caverns, of the Earth in its primitive state, worshipped on the sources and mountain tops. She ruled over wild beasts, and was also a 'bee goddess'. Because Cybele presided over mountains and fortresses, her crown was in the form of a city wall. Recent excavations at the ancient holy locality of "Tsarevi Kuli" (Kings Towers) near Strumitsa in R. of Macedonia, brought to daylight a scoop of some 30 feminine statuettes of Mother Goddess Kibela (i.e. *Cybele*), some of which resilient to the 5th millennium BCE. She appears with mural crown and veil, seated on a throne or in a chariot, drawn by two lions.

Numerous statuettes of Cybele show that the cult of the goddess was largely present in

the Paionian⁷ territory. When the Macedonian *Brygians* from northern regions of Pelagonia plain migrated to Asia Minor in the 7-6th century BCE, where they became known as *Phrygians*, they also brought with them the worship of the Great Mother Goddess / *Cybele*. The Macedonic Brygian/Phrygian worship of *Cybele* and her consort *Attis* included the annual celebration of mysteries on the return of the spring season. Along with her consort *Cybele* was worshipped in wild, emotional, orgiastic ceremonies. At *Cybele*'s annual festival on March 24 (the New Year eve of ancient Macedonic calendar), her chief priest drew gifts and offers to the music of cymbals, drums, and flutes. The cult ritual of *Cybele* was directed by eunuch priests called *Corybantes*, who led the faithful in orgiastic rites accompanied by wild cries and the frenzied music of flutes, drums, and cymbals.

These ritual traditions were also passed on and attributed to the *Maenads*⁸ and the worship of yet another Macedonic deity, *Dionysus*. They presided over sexually-based fertility cult, where the designation '*fertility*' allowed to these predominantly male societies to dismiss the supreme role of the Mother Goddesses in ancient religions.

Much later, when adopted by the predacious Romans, the Dionysiac cult was re-adapted and transformed into '*Roman festival of Bacchus*,'⁹ and its worshipers and festivities were renamed into *Bachanalian*s.

⁷ Upper Macedonia; along the river Vardar valley, today mostly in Republic of Macedonia.

⁸ A term given to women under the ecstatic spell of *Dionysus*.

⁹ *Bacchus*, another name for *Dionysus*.



Above: **Macedonian bronze sacramental statuette of Macedonic-Paionian/Phrygian goddess Cybele (Kibela) on a cart pulled by two lions, 4/3rd century BCE (only small part of the 2nd century BCE Roman plunder from Macedonia, today in Metropolitan Museum as part of the much recent WW2 American plunder from Italy)**

Next page: **Another (older) terracotta statuette of the same goddess from the 6th century BCE, with tambourine (or sun-disc) and flanked by lions, part of 30 feminine statuettes scoop, some of which resilient to the 5th millennium BCE, found recently at the ancient holy locality of "Tsarevi Kuli " (Kings Towers) near Strumitsa, Republic of Macedonia.**



Her identification by the Romans with the goddesses *Maia*, *Juno* (e.g. Etruscan *Uni*), *Rhea*, etc. contributed to the establishment of her worship on a firm footing. By the end of the Roman Republic it had attained prominence, and under the empire it became one of the most important cults in the Roman world.

In all of her aspects, Prehistoric, Pelasgo-Macedonic-Brygian or Paionian, Phrygian, Etruscan, Roman, etc. the Great Mother Goddess was characterized by essentially the

same qualities. She was depicted by her universal motherhood as the great parent not only of gods but also of human beings and their homes.

The Matriarchate left deep traces in the culture of Macedonia. The cult of the Great Mother Goddess survived and arrived until our days, transformed during the christianity into the cult of Holy Mary, mother of Jesus. Even today she is the patron saint of the modern city of Skopje.



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